our fourfooted friends

Animal Rescue League of Boston • Winter 1995

Animal Rescue League of Boston

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Our Fourfooted Friends

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COVER:

Home for the Holidays — "Chloe" gets cozy, surrounded by all of her favorite holiday things!
Photo by Bob Howard.

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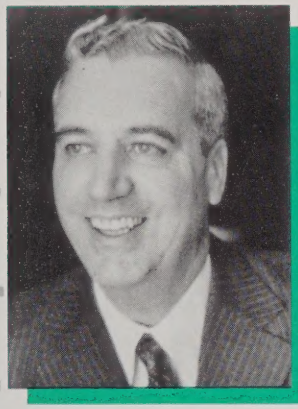

Arthur G. Slade, *President*

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Strong Support for Trap Ban Petition

As we go to press with this issue of *Our Fourfooted Friends,* we are encouraged to believe and hope that the Initiative Petition has been successful in obtaining many more than the needed 65,000 signatures to put the issue of the steel jaw leghold trap on the ballot in 1996. The deadline for filing these petitions has just passed and we are delighted with the reported heavy response. It seems extremely likely that the necessary number of signatures collected will be far in excess of the number required. We look forward to the success of this effort.

The law proposed by this Petition would prohibit the use, setting, manufacture or possession of any trap to capture fur-bearing mammals, except common mouse and rat traps, nets and box or cage traps that confine a whole animal without grasping any part of it. Traps designed to grip an animal's body or body part, such as steel jaw leghold traps, padded leghold traps and snares, would be prohibited. Federal and state health officials could use such traps in case of a threat to human health or safety. Where a property owner had reasonably tried but failed to correct an animal problem on the property using a legal trap, the owner could apply for and the state Director of Fisheries and Wildlife could issue a permit to use a prohibited type of trap, except a leghold trap, for up to 30 days to correct the problem.

Any person violating any of these requirements could be punished by a fine of between $300 and $1000, or imprisonment for up to 6 months, or both, for each prohibited trap and each day of violation. A person convicted for a second violation would be required to surrender, and could never again obtain, any trapping license or problem animal control permit.

There should be no question about the abuse caused by such traps because there is abundant scientific evidence and practical field data that show that animals caught in these traps not only suffer substantial injury from the traps themselves, but also suffer great harm due to their frantic struggle to free themselves from the traps' death grip.

We are especially grateful to our many members and friends who responded so quickly and generously with their time in collecting signatures for this tremendous Initiative Petition drive. We alone received 1,800 petitions with an average of at least 10 names on each one.

This has been a wonderful first step and we look forward to the next chapter in this chain of events.

Pet Therapist: A HOWLING SUCCESS

By Betty Lilyestrom

Ed. Note: In 1991, the star of this heartwarming humane success story was found by League agents in a burned-out building, thin and starving herself but trying desperately to nurse her litter of eight puppies. Today, the dog once so in need of help brings joy to the lives of others.

Her owner, Geraldine McQuoid of Rochdale, told the League: "I can't help but think that if it weren't for you guys caring so much, Scruffy wouldn't be around to bring love to my family and all of the nursing home residents."

John Crayer greets Scruffy on her weekly visit.

LEICESTER — "Scruffy's here! Scruffy's here!"

The words echoed down the east wing corridor of The Meadows Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation Center shortly after 10 yesterday morning — and the reaction was instantaneous.

Heads popped excitedly out of patients' rooms, faces that had appeared almost blank a minute before suddenly wore smiles.

Scruffy, the therapy dog, was at The Meadows for her weekly visit.

A smallish, black 4-year-old mixed breed, Scruffy has a mission in life, according to her owner, Geraldine A. McQuoid. That mission is to bring a little joy into the lives of patients, most of them senior citizens, who may be fretting at being confined to bed or wheelchair or just at being uprooted from their own homes.

"Many of our patients had pets of their own at home and they miss them," said McQuoid, who is director of nursing at The Meadows. "And many of them now enjoy the opportunity to have an animal around to pet."

Bringing a friendly animal in to interact with patients may not cure their physical ills, but it can brighten their spirits, McQuoid said. And a positive attitude can go a long way toward helping a patient heal.

So around 10 a.m. every Thursday McQuoid's father, Raymond McQuoid, brings Scruffy to The Meadows, hooks on her bright pink leash and walks her around the nursing center.

Scruffy visits patients in their rooms, in the corridors, in the lounges, prancing up with wagging tail to have her head patted or her ears scratched.

"She's friendly with everyone," said Raymond McQuoid, who arrives with pockets full of dog "cookies" to pass out to the patients.

"They love to feed her — and, of course, she loves to be fed," he said.

John Crayer, seated in his wheelchair in the corridor near the nurses' station, is one who looks forward to Scruffy's weekly visits. He kept up a running conversation with her as he popped dog cookies into her mouth.

In the lounge, Margaret Lucier was moved to tell Scruffy about her dog, Susu, a Lhasa apso she had to leave behind when she came into the nursing home.

"I don't know what's happened to her now," Lucier said a bit sadly, but she brightened as Scruffy lifted her head for a pat.

"But you're a lovely dog, even if you aren't a Lhasa apso," Lucier said as she caressed Scruffy.

Three years ago, no one would have predicted that Scruffy would grow up to have such a useful career. In fact, there were many who doubted she would grow up at all.

"When she was 10 months old," Geraldine McQuoid said, "she was rescued, with her litter of eight puppies, from a burned-out house in Dorchester. She was starving, with all her nourishment going to feed the puppies. She had been shot in the leg and had other physical ailments."

Pictures of Scruffy and her litter appeared in the Boston newspapers and touched the animal lover in McQuoid, who was then working at the Freedom Trail clinic just a few blocks from the Animal Rescue League.

McQuoid had Scruffy's medical needs taken care of, with the help of veterinarian George Yancey of Leicester. And she put the dog through obedience training and then through therapy animal training.

Today Scruffy lives at McQuoid's home in Rochdale with two other dogs, many cats and two horses. And she gets along famously with all of them, McQuoid said.

She gets along just as famously with the patients at The Meadows, including some who might not have been expected to react to her presence.

McQuoid tells of the young man who came to the facility as a stroke victim, unable to talk and paralyzed except for the fingers on one hand.

"But Scruffy got through to him," McQuoid said. "His mother told us he had had a dog he was very fond of, so we put Scruffy up on the bed and he stretched out those unparalyzed fingers and scratched her ear. Now he looks forward to her visit every week."

Raymond McQuoid, who was present for that first visit and all the subsequent ones, still shakes his head in wonderment.

"He couldn't move his mouth," he said, "but it was the first time I've ever seen a man smile with his eyes."

Reprinted with permission from the *Worcester Telegram & Gazette*.

Photo by Robert W. Lilyestrom

A Veterinary Update:

Weighty Questions

By Bosmat Gal, D.V.M.

Is your dog leaving a bigger dent on the couch lately? Has your cat started to ignore the morning gathering of birds rather than leap up on the windowsill to check things out? It may be time to take out the scales. Recent surveys indicate that as many as 25% of all dogs and cats that are seen by veterinarians are overweight, if not obese.

Excess weight not only detracts from your pet's appearance and energy levels, it can also lead to serious health problems. Very overweight dogs are at greater risk for traumatic and degenerative orthopedic disorders, and cardiovascular disease. Obesity has also been implicated as a predisposing factor for diabetes in both dogs and cats, and can also increase the severity of the disease.

If you suspect your dog or cat is putting on excess pounds, it is important to consult your veterinarian, who can not only work with you to develop a planned weight loss program, but also determine whether there are any underlying physical problems that may be causing weight gain. Here are a few of the questions veterinarians are most often asked by concerned pet owners:

How fat is too fat?

Dogs and cats in optimal condition have ribs that are palpable, without an excess fat covering, and an abdomen that appears "tucked up" at the rear, when viewed from the side. If the rib cage is not visible when the animal moves (except for long-haired dogs), the ribs can barely be felt, and there are noticeable fat deposits over the lumbar spine and tail base, an animal is considered to be overweight or stout. If there are large fat deposits over the chest, spine and tail base, and the waist and abdominal tuck are totally absent, the animal is considered obese.

Body condition is a better indicator of excess weight than standard weight charts for dogs, since there are so many variations in breeds, body frames and other factors affecting ideal weight. Generally, an animal's body weight at the age of maturity, usually one year, is considered its optimal weight, and any cat over 14 pounds is likely to be categorized as overweight.

Why is my pet gaining weight when I'm only feeding it the standard, recommended commercial pet food diet?

Treats, snacks and human food should, of course, be completely eliminated from a reducing diet. It may also be helpful to keep your pet out of the kitchen or dining area when meals are being prepared or eaten, and feed the dieting animal separately from other pets to prevent food snatching. A portion of the dry form of the reducing diet can be reserved for between-meal snacks, and your veterinarian may be able to recommend low-calorie treats, such as popcorn without butter, if you are absolutely incapable of ignoring those begging eyes!

Finally, remember that obesity is much easier to prevent than to correct. Growing puppies are generally permitted to eat whenever they are hungry, but this is the time to talk with your veterinarian about a feeding program that will ensure your pet is at its very best body weight and condition when it reaches adulthood.

Though there are some breeds that are thought to have a genetic predisposition to weight gain (including spaniels, beagles, basset hounds and dachshunds), most excess weight is a direct result of consuming more calories than are needed, or being utilized, for daily energy expenditure. In other words, too much food and too little exercise. When you analyze your pet's dietary history for your veterinarian, be certain not to forget the extra treats, or even food your pet may be consuming while visiting the neighbors.

With a thorough physical examination, your veterinarian will be able to rule out any physical problems that might be contributing to weight gain, such as hypothyroidism, diabetes or pituitary disorders.

What can I do to get my pet back in shape?

The single, most important factor in a successful weight loss program is the total commitment of everyone involved with the animal. Your veterinarian will work with you to set a weight loss goal and develop a program to meet that target. This will include setting the amount of calories in the daily diet, developing a meal plan and exercise regime, monitoring weight loss and adjusting the diet as needed, and finally, developing a "maintenance" diet to ensure that weight is not regained.

American Humane Honors ARL President

AHA executive director Bob Hart (right) presents the Lifetime Achievement Award to Arthur G. Slade, League president.

Humane society and animal welfare professionals from around the world gathered in the shadow of Mt. Hood, October 8–11, to attend the American Humane Association's annual conference, where League president Arthur G. Slade was honored with one of the association's highest awards.

AHA executive director Bob Hart presented Arthur Slade with the AHA's Lifetime Achievement Award "for his more than four decades of devoted efforts toward improving the welfare of animals on the local, national and international levels."

The American Humane Association's animal protection division is a national organization of animal welfare agencies and concerned individuals dedicated to the prevention of cruelty, neglect, abuse and exploitation of animals. Founded in 1877, the AHA is headquartered in Denver, CO, and has offices in Los Angeles, CA, and Washington, DC.

This year's conference, held in Portland, OR, featured over 35 workshops where participants were able to exchange information and share ideas on concerns ranging from local community animal control problems to worldwide trends in animal abuse and exploitation. Representing the League at the meeting, in addition to the president, were Sonia L. DiTommaso, director of public relations, and Edward J. Powers, director of education.

The AHA's Lifetime Achievement Award was established to honor a person from a local animal care agency who has "dedicated his or her life to the service of animal welfare." Arthur Slade, president of the League since 1977, more than fits that description. He began his 40 years of humane service as a student of animal sciences at the University of Connecticut where he received a B.S. degree in the mid-1950s. He then joined the Connecticut Humane Society as an investigator, and served as the director of that society's animal department from 1960 to 1964, at which time he was appointed director of operations at the Animal Rescue League of Boston, serving in that position for the next 14 years.

In 1978, a year after becoming president of the League, he became a member of the AHA's board of directors, chairing the animal advisory committee for several years and serving as president of the AHA board from 1983 to 1986. He is also a past president of the New England Federation of Humane Societies and served as chairman of AHA's New England Service Council.

Enjoying the AHA reception are (l to r): Alice Hart, Walter and Carolyn Bird, Arthur and Susan Slade, and Edward Powers.

Weatherproof Your Pet!

Unless they are lucky enough to live in year-round temperate climates, animals suffer the way people do from variations in climate, including both the extreme temperatures of summer and, most especially, the severe wind chill factors, snow and plunging temperatures which characterize a New England winter.

Dogs are domesticated pack animals, the majority of them happiest when they can live indoors socializing with their "pack" or family, and enjoying the same comfort adjustments used by their owners to regulate their own environment, namely heating and air-conditioning. Toy breeds, elderly or ailing animals and very young puppies should always be allowed to live indoors, most veterinarians agree.

There are some dogs that prefer living outdoors, and actually enjoy snow and cold temperatures, like samoyeds, huskies and malamutes. If they live outdoors year-round, these dogs will begin in the fall to shed their soft undercoat and grow a heavier, insulating undercoat. Even these breeds, however, need adequate shelter in the form of a doghouse to protect them from the elements.

They and other outdoor dogs also need to be treated consistently by their owners in order to acclimate successfully to outdoor living. During a blizzard or severe storm, for example, it's better to bring the animal into the garage or basement, where the temperature change is less radical, than to bring it into a well-heated house.

The dogs that suffer most are those that are shuttled from indoors to outdoors from one day to the next, or left outdoors all day without shelter and brought inside at night. "Imagine coming indoors from the cold, leaving your coat on the whole time you're in the house, and then going out again into the cold. You'll be hot when you're inside, and freezing when you go out," explains League law enforcement officer Jack Burns. "These dogs never have the opportunity to adjust to climate changes, or to grow a protective coat."

Owners are required by law to provide proper shelter for their pets, but Burns estimates that about 75 to 80 percent of the complaints received at the League deal with animals left outdoors without proper shelter, with calls rising in mid-winter and mid-summer. The League's mission is always to try to educate the owner and work with them to correct the situation, with legal action a reluctant, last resort. "We try to find out *why* the dog is outdoors," Burns explains. "Sometimes we find that owners grew up with dogs, but never learned to housetrain them because their parents took charge of that job. Then they adopt a dog and go out to work all day. When they come home to find the carpet soiled, they think the only solution is to tie the

animal up outside all day." The dog feels abandoned and confused, and frequently becomes aggressive. This is a problem that is easily correctable with training, for both dog and owner. "Our goal is to show the person how to become a better pet owner," Burns notes.

Other people think they are providing proper shelter if they bring their dog in at night. Not so. "Any animal that is left outdoors without shelter for more than 20 minutes at a stretch in severe weather, either below 30 degrees or extremely hot, is in real jeopardy."

Bigger Is Not Better

Proper shelter consists of a doghouse, sturdy enough to provide adequate protection from the weather, and just large enough for the dog to stand up, turn around in a circle and lie down. "Bigger is not better when it comes to a doghouse, because the animal has to warm up the interior with its own body heat," the League advises.

To keep out rain, snow and direct, hot sun, the doghouse should be totally enclosed, except for a front opening just large enough for the dog to fit through comfortably. It should also be raised off the ground about six or eight inches, with blocks or bricks, to prevent moisture or cold from coming up through the bottom. A flap or a plastic covering over the opening may help keep out the elements, but some dogs are put off by the plastic and refuse to use the shelter. Position the doghouse so that it is facing away from the northeast wind.

Inside, furnish the shelter with hay or straw, so your dog can create a comfortable den. If you put blankets or rugs in your pet's house, be sure to check their condition on a daily basis. "Your pet doesn't like lying on a wet blanket any more than you would," Burns points out.

Be sure the outdoor dog has access to fresh water at all times (check to see that the water bowl hasn't frozen over), and inspect the doghouse regularly to make sure the wood is not rotting, and there are no nails or other sharp objects that can injure your pet.

Winter Diet and Grooming

Dogs that live outdoors during the winter need more food to fuel the higher metabolic rates required to provide body heat. Talk to your veterinarian to find out how much, and what kind of extra diet supplements are appropriate, depending on average outside temperatures and the amount of time your dog spends outdoors, as well as its activity level.

Heavy winter coats also require more brushing and grooming to remove mats and evenly distribute oils throughout the coat. Feet need extra attention, too, since rock salt, sand or ice balls can be extremely irritating. Take extra precautions with automobile antifreeze which is a highly toxic threat. Wipe up any antifreeze that is spilled in the garage or driveway immediately; ingesting even a small amount is potentially deadly for your pet.

Pet Doors

Though the emphasis in this article is on dogs, cats and rabbits also require access to shelter from extreme cold or heat, and pet doors probably represent the best possible accommodation for both dogs and cats. The ideal situation is a properly constructed doghouse, a fenced-in yard where your pet is free to roam, and a pet door that allows the animals to go in and out of the house at will. "Dogs know when it's time to come in out of the rain or cold — they're often smarter than we are," Burns concludes.

For those who would like to build their own doghouse, the League will be happy to furnish simple, easy-to-follow building plans. Just contact the law enforcement department, at (617) 426-9170.

FALL FAIR '95

Outstanding autumn weather and an enthusiastic crowd of browsers and shoppers combined to make the League's annual fall fair, Thursday, October 19, a funraising and fundraising success. Under the able leadership of cochairpersons Jane Marshall of Boston and Helen and Earl Wentzel of Weymouth, the event raised over $5,670 to help homeless animals.

Here are some scenes showing fairgoers shopping for treasures and taste treats, bidding on items at the noon auction, and enjoying a visit with a member of the Boston Mounted Police Unit.

Prints of Distinction:

1996 ANIMAL PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

If you, like most people, think your pet is the cutest, most appealing and photogenic animal you've ever seen, here's your chance to prove it.

The Animal Rescue League is pleased to announce that it will hold an animal photography contest this spring, to recognize and honor the special bonds of affection that link people to their animal companions.

Amateur photographers of all ages (no professionals, please) are invited to submit color or black-and-white photos of their favorite animal friends by the contest deadline of March 31, 1996. Animals may be alone, or with people or props, and photos must be unretouched and should be enlarged to approximately 5 x 7 or 8 x 10 inches. Those entering should hold on to their negatives, but be prepared to make them available for reproduction if necessary.

Prizes will be awarded in two divisions, adult and junior (under 18), with the winning entries selected by a panel of judges and announced during Be Kind to Animals Week (May 5–11). Awards will be in the form of gift certificates for photographic equipment or supplies in the amounts of $150, $100 and $75.

The winning photos will be published in *Our Fourfooted Friends*, and all photos submitted will become the property of the Animal Rescue League of Boston.

Here are some tips for capturing that elusive, perfect moment on film:

- Keep backgrounds simple — clutter will detract from your subject.
- Pick a quiet spot for your photo session, away from people, other pets or noises that may be distracting.
- If you are using props — simple things, like a favorite toy, a paper bag or basket — be sure to have them all in place before trying to get your pet to pose.
- Check and double-check to be sure your lighting is adequate, whether you're working with daylight or flash.
- To capture the animal's attention, make noises with a whistle, crumpled paper or even a jingling set of keys.

To enter: Affix a printed label or sticker to the back of each entry with the photographer's name, address, phone number and age of the photographer if he or she is under 18. Be sure not to write on the back of the photo with a pen or sharp pencil which can damage the surface of the print. Mail entries by March 31 to: Animal Photo Contest, Animal Rescue League of Boston, P.O. Box 265, Boston, MA 02117. For further information or questions, call (617) 426-9170.

Calling Young Artists!

The League is also planning to hold a contest for children this spring to see who can come up with the best animal-related designs for T-shirts, in preparation for Be Kind to Animals Week in the beginning of May. If you would like to receive more information, and contest rules which are currently being drawn up, please send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: Sonia DiTommaso, Director of Public Relations, Animal Rescue League of Boston, P.O. Box 265, Boston, MA 02117.

NEWSFRONT

ANIMAL RESCUE LEAGUE OF BOSTON

SANTA SCHEDULES ANNUAL VISIT TO POLICE HORSES

Members and friends are invited to stop by Faneuil Hall in downtown Boston, at 11 a.m., Monday, December 18, for Santa's annual visit to horses from the Boston and State Police, and the Boston Park Rangers. He'll be delivering carrots, apples, blankets and horsefeed to the area's "fourfooted finest" as part of the League's 82nd annual Christmas Dinner for Horses. Begun in 1913, this holiday tradition was a way to say thank you to the city's working horse population, numbered in the thousands at that time, and an opportunity to check on the horses' condition and quarters.

This will be the second visit to the League for Santa who made a guest appearance Saturday, December 2, to pose for photographs with pets at League headquarters on Chandler Street in Boston.

DOG HERO SAVES FAMILY FROM FIRE

A Brookline family owes their lives to their eight-year-old Jack Russell terrier. "Jake" woke his sleeping family at 2:30 a.m. when their home caught fire this past October.

"Although Jake was in a room filled with smoke and flames, with the door closed, his ferocious barking awoke his family so that they and he could escape. Because the door was closed, the fire alarm did not go off," according to Margaret H. McKinney of Boston whose daughter's family owns Jake. "He and my daughter and her son and daughter are living with me — the grandmother — until they can return to their home.

"Jake is an honored guest," she writes.

KINDNESS TO ANIMALS: YOU CAN TAKE IT WITH YOU!

The World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) has issued a brochure to help travelers support the humane treatment of animals both here and abroad. "Tips for the Compassionate Traveler" contains guidelines and suggestions on how to handle animal-related situations that may be encountered on the road, as well as a worksheet and instructions on how to document and report any incidents of cruelty to animals that are witnessed while traveling. Copies are available from WSPA, 29 Perkins St., P.O. Box 190, Boston, MA 02130; Tel: (617) 522-7000.

ANIMAL ADVOCATES MOVE TO BAN BULLFIGHTING

Bullfighting opponents and animal protection activists convened in Mexico City in early October for the first Latin American anti-bullfight conference, hosted by the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA). Mexico was chosen as the conference site because it is the major bullfighting nation in Latin America, and Mexico City has the largest bullfighting ring in the world, with a capacity for 50,000 spectators.

Those attending shared information on the rise or decline of the sport's popularity in their areas, and worked to develop strategies to end what actress Bridget Bardot describes in a letter to conference delegates as "a cruel, archaic and degrading spectacle where young people and children witness suffering and lack of respect for life." They explored approaches which include legislation, public education, the role of the church and media in shaping public opinion, and government action against bullfights.

A 1992 poll conducted in Spain showed that over 92% of the respondents believe animals should be protected by law from cruelty, and 87% said that animals should not be made to suffer for public entertainment. "Despite growing opposition by the general public in countries where the bullfights are held," said Neil Trent, WSPA director for North and Latin America, "bullfights are very lucrative for a core group of industry insiders. There are huge profits being made from animal suffering and cruelty."

BLESSING OF ANIMALS HELD ON CAPE COD

Dogs, cats, small pets, goats and a horse lined up at the West Yarmouth Congregational Church September 23 for the eighth annual

Blessing of the Animals, sponsored by the town of Yarmouth's Animal Control Department. The standard poodle shown being blessed is "Bizou," with owner Georgette Hilliard who adopted the dog in July from the League's Brewster branch.

The ceremony was dedicated this year to "animal shelters and workers," and the Yarmouth Animal Control Department presented a plaque to the League's Brewster branch "in honor of your dedication, love and commitment to animals and your community." Pictured at the presentation are (left to right): Yarmouth animal control officers Rick Nelson and Penny Schiller, Lynda Brogden, manager of the Brewster branch, Dawn Lee, shelter agent and Trish Cunningham and Jyl Farmer of Yarmouth Animal Control.

The staff at the League has come up with the following holiday "wish list" of items that would add to the safety, care or comfort of our animal friends. If you would like to donate any of these items, or contribute toward the purchase of a piece of equipment, please call (617) 426-9170.

- 2 Nets for Coda Net Gun
  Used to humanely capture animals who are in danger.
  Each net costs $285
- 35mm camera for law enforcement department
- 8mm Camcorder with 3" LCD screen
  Would be used to tape rescues for educational training purposes. $600
- Sled for ice rescues
  Approximately $3,000
- Wet suit for water rescues
- Towels and blankets
  Used to line cages for warmth and after bathing.

LEAGUE ANNOUNCES NEW MANAGEMENT APPOINTMENTS

In early November, Arthur G. Slade, League president, announced two major staff appointments: Edward J. Powers was named director of operations, succeeding Robert G. Walsh who left the League after nearly 15 years of service to start a new career in law enforcement, and Sonia L. DiTommaso was appointed director of education and public relations.

A member of the staff since 1984, Edward Powers has served as a law enforcement inspector, director of the League's summer school and, since 1989, as director of education. He has a B.S. degree in animal sciences from the University of New Hampshire, and a master's degree in education from the University of Massachusetts.

Sonia DiTommaso joined the staff as director of public relations last May, and will be expanding her responsibilities as director of both education and public relations. Formerly alumni relations officer at Boston University College of Communication, where she received a B.S. degree in public relations, she also has teaching experience and certification, and is pursuing her master's degree at Worcester State College.

PETS IN THE PICTURE

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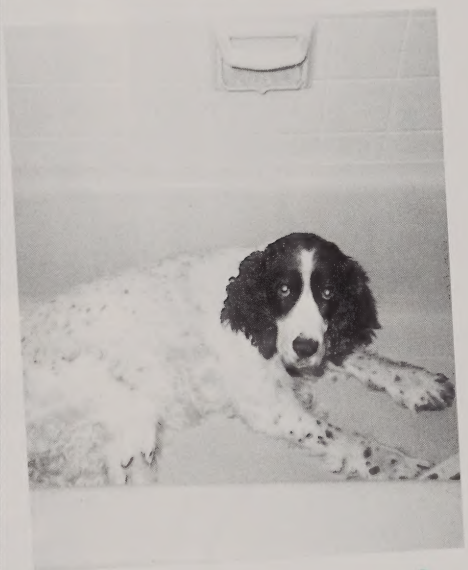

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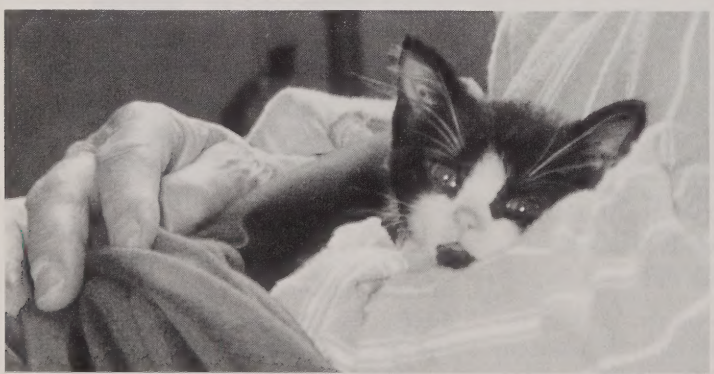

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6

1 Shown resting on the couch in her Charlestown home, "Millie" was adopted from the League's Salem shelter 14 years ago by the Mechan family. "Millie is a beautiful angora calico . . . a wonderful friend with a mischievous personality whom we love dearly. She has battled kidney disease for close to two years now, and is a brave patient." Patricia Mechan writes. "We would like to thank the League for their pet adoption work . . . without it, our family would have never had the joy that Millie has brought us over the years."

2 No fancy feline toys for "Bianca" and "Oliver" when a cardboard box is available! Judi Chamberlin of West Somerville adopted Bianca (top) from the League's Boston shelter two years ago and found her companion Oliver at the Salem shelter last summer. "Thanks so much!" she writes.

3 Bernard Hughes of Hyde Park wonders if any other dogs enjoy sleeping in the bathroom tub, the way his English springer spaniel "K.C." does. He started sleeping in the bathroom at the age of four, after spending two weeks in the hospital, his owner writes, adding a wish for the League to "keep up the good works."

4 The Marinelli family of Melrose shares this photo of their new friend "Pee Wee," adopted in April. "After he runs wild around the house for a couple of hours, he likes to be held. We enjoy him so much," they write, "even though he can be fresh at times!"

5 "Brewster" the bunny grooms his pal "Cotton Candy" at the Wareham home of Erin and Michael Brammer who write: "Many rabbits, although they enjoy being petted and around people, can still be quite reserved and skittish — not Brewster! He can lay on your chest for hours licking your chin and cheeks. He sleeps on chairs and runs around the kitchen; in the evening, he gets to go in the living room and sack out where he pleases, usually on a couch or in front of the heater. I am so grateful that you were there to keep him safe until we could come for him! We chose the name Brewster (after the League's Cape Cod adoption shelter) because our whole experience with you was wonderful. Thank you for being so helpful and for entrusting us with this little life!"

6 "Daisy" is a "sweetheart, full of pep and very friendly," reports Anastasia Dwyer of Allston. "She loves being outside (in a nice, big yard, all fenced in), and she's so much company for me . . . I just love her!"

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